



## EVENT & SPEAKER POLICY

The facilities of SMICC & Islamic Community Centre (SMICC) are used by a variety of people and organisations for public events, conferences, seminars, etc. SMICC Management Team have a duty to protect its reputation and by extension, the UK charity sector.

In addition to our own events and speakers, our facilities are hired or used by others who must agree to the conditions specified both in our hiring policy and in this policy, which includes conditions designed to prevent bringing SMICC into disrepute. It is essential that speakers and hirers are aware of our policies and commit to adhering to them.

This policy explains our rights, responsibilities and legal obligations and how we will enforce the policy. It applies to all individuals, organisations and SMICC projects whilst using the facilities of SMICC.

It is a condition for the use of SMICC facilities that any hirer or speaker must be bound by this policy.

This policy will be kept up to date and reviewed at least every 3 years.

<i>Last Review &amp; update</i>	<i>April 2023</i>
<i>Next Review</i>	<i>April 2026</i>

# Event & Speakers Policy



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## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Why do we have an Event Speakers Policy?

For a charity organisation such as SMICC it is vital to uphold our standards. If someone were to use our facilities to promote hatred or violence this would be against our core values. There has to be a balance between freedom of speech and freedom from abuse and vilification. SMICC may refuse or cancel any booking where it deems it is in its own interest to do so.

#### Aims of this Policy

- To ensure SMICC is not used for purposes incompatible with its objects as a charity
- To ensure the facilities of SMICC are not used as a platform to cause offense or to promote intolerance, hatred or violence
- To protect the reputation of SMICC both in the Muslim community and wider society
- To protect freedom of speech in accordance with the law
- To foster and promote community cohesion
- To provide a framework for determining the suitability of a proposed speaker

## 2 RIGHTS, RESPONSIBILITIES AND LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

The Trustees of SMICC have a duty to uphold the rights of people using its facilities. They must also protect SMICC from harm, especially from abuse for extremist purposes:

*“All charities must comply with UK law and so must not promote or support terrorism or extremism, or other illegal conduct, such as racial or religious hatred. Nor can a charity’s name, premises or money be used to promote extremist and other activities which are inappropriate under charity law.”*

(Charity Commission, [Compliance Toolkit – Protecting Charities from Harm](#))

### RIGHTS

Article 19 of [The Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) states:

*“Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.”*

Freedom of speech is not without limits. There are occasions when it is necessary to restrain freedom of speech, e.g. if it is known that a speaker at an event may:

- Commit a criminal offence
- Incite others to commit a criminal act
- Discriminate against a protected group

## LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

### Charity Law

Trustees must:

- act reasonably and prudently in all matters relating to their charity
- always act in the charity's interests
- safeguard and protect the charity's assets, including its reputation

*"Trustees should normally consider obtaining external professional advice on matters where there may be material risk to the charity, or where the trustees may be in breach of their duties and on complex legal matters. In higher risk situations, it will be difficult to see how they could show they have discharged their duties without doing so. In some circumstances it may be appropriate to seek formal regulatory advice from the Commission under section 110 Charities Act 2011 that they are acting within their charity law duties."*

*"Trustees must comply with the rules on carrying out political activities. For example, trustees must not allow the charity to be used as a vehicle for the expression of the political views of any individual trustee or staff member (in this context this means personal or party-political views)."*

(Charity Commission, [Compliance Toolkit – Protecting Charities from Harm](#))

### Terrorism

The Terrorism Act 2000 makes it a criminal offence to incite or encourage others to commit acts of terrorism or to glorify terrorism, whether directly or indirectly.

*"It is sufficient if the speaker is reckless as to whether members of the public may be encouraged to commit, prepare or instigate acts of terrorism. Charities cannot provide a platform for or condone or support terrorist activities or ideologies. Trustees must be vigilant to ensure that a charity's premises, assets, staff, volunteers and other resources cannot be used for activities that may, or may appear to, support or condone terrorist activities."*

*"Charity trustees may commit a criminal offence if the charity is connected to or supports a proscribed organisation. Trustees must therefore put in place proper procedures for managing the risks of coming into contact with proscribed organisations, designated persons, groups or entities and take appropriate steps if the situation arises."*

*"Even indirect or informal links with a proscribed terrorist organisation pose unacceptable risks to the property of a charity and its proper and effective administration. This may be an association with someone who is a known supporter of a proscribed organisation, or allowing a member of a proscribed organisation to influence the behaviour or activities of the charity. Examples of indirect or informal links to proscribed organisations include allowing or using charity premises, events, website or literature to support a proscribed organisation. Trustees must ensure that the risks caused by associating with such persons or organisations are properly assessed and managed."*

(Charity Commission, [Compliance Toolkit – Protecting Charities from Harm](#))

### Racial & Religious Hatred

The incitement of hatred or violence by a speaker, based on religious or racial grounds, as outlined in the Government's legislation 'Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006', is unacceptable. One of our main goals as a community based organisation and religious establishment is to promote social wellbeing and mutual harmony.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

SMICC as a charity has the following objects:

- a. Advance the Islamic faith for the benefit of the public by maintaining and managing a community centre and mosque in Swansea city.
- b. Advance education and to provide facilities in the interests of social welfare for recreation and leisure-time occupation with the object of improving the conditions of life for the general public and in particular the Muslim community.
- c. Promote such other charitable purposes as may from time to time be determined

The responsibility of SMICC is to ensure its facilities are used to further these objects, not hamper them. For this reason, its hiring policy includes the following:

*The Management of SMICC reserves the **right to refuse** any booking that:*

- *may present a threat to public disorder*
- *may promote or incite hatred or violence against others*
- *may risk alienating the SMICC's beneficiaries or supporters*
- *may bring SMICC into disrepute*
- *may cause offence to other users or disrupt other activities of the SMICC*
- *may breach SMICC's Agreement to Hire*

## 3 OTHER FACTORS SMICC MAY CONSIDER

Even if a proposed event or speaker may not contravene any laws or Charity Commission guidelines, it may undermine the SMICC's own code, mission or constitution, particularly if restrictions have been placed on the Individual(s) by SMICC.

For example, SMICC may not wish to host an event linked to a business or organisation where there was a danger that the reputation of SMICC was being used purely to enhance a business interest or a restricted individual has been invited by the hirer as a speaker, guest, participant or attendee. In such circumstances, the whole event will be cancelled with immediate effect.

There are other factors that may raise issues for SMICC. One of the most common issues is outlined below.

### Religious Issues

SMICC seeks to preserve authentic Islamic teachings. Such teachings encompass a wide range of views and opinions on certain aspects of Islam. There are also views and opinions which are not part of the mainstream understanding of Islam.

SMICC can accommodate differences of opinion within Islamic thought and through interfaith work differences between religions. But in cases where an event or speaker might promote views which could be wrongly associated with SMICC, then SMICC reserves the right not to allow these to proceed.

## 4 HOW WE INTEND TO ENFORCE THIS POLICY

All SMICC management team must be made aware of this policy and will be informed of its contents either through the Senior Management, staff meetings or via internal communication procedures.

Potential hirers of the SMICC's facilities will be given a copy of this policy.

Once a request for the use of our facilities has been received, we will undertake reasonable background checks using information, where appropriate from:

- Recognised UK agencies
- Reliable media and internet sources
- Partner agencies and organisations

Information gathered about any potential hirer or speaker will be assessed in the light of the guidance in sections 2 and 3.

Based on the information SMICC may decide one of the following:

- To allow the hirer's booking to proceed unchanged
- To require the hirer to change the subject matter, named speakers/attendees, publicity material, or any other aspect of the booking deemed necessary by the SMICC
- To refuse the booking

Even if a booking has been allowed, there may be circumstances in which SMICC later decides to cancel the booking (see sections 3 & 5).

## 5 EVENT REFUSAL OR CANCELLATION

SMICC always reserves the right to refuse or cancel any booking where it deems it is in its own interests to do so.

The circumstances in which this might happen include (but are not restricted to):

- A hirer publicising an event before it has received formal SMICC approval
- A hirer making any change to its event content, speakers, guest, participants, attendees or publicity materials which in the view of SMICC may have prevented the granting of the booking
- New information coming to light about the organisers or the speakers which, had it been known at the time of the booking, may have led SMICC not to allow the booking
- Advice from the Police, Charity Commission or other recognised authority that the event should not be allowed to go ahead, or a particular speaker should not be allowed to speak

### **Cancellation on the day of the event**

There may be circumstances where SMICC has to cancel an event on the day of the event itself, even if the event has already started. The circumstances in which this might happen include (but are not restricted to):

- A hirer or speaker diverging from what was agreed in the booking or inviting restricted individual(s) as a speaker, guest, participant or attendee
- A threat to public order, from whatever source, where it is deemed that allowing the event to continue may cause harm
- Intervention by the Police
- Any other unforeseen circumstances, such as serious power failures, failure of water supply, or any other factors, where SMICC (or staff acting on its behalf) deem it inappropriate to continue with the event